

TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

BULLETIN

William J. Griffin, Editor
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THE SCIENCE OF FOLKLORE AND MODERN SOCIETY

By Josef Rysan
Vanderbilt University

The science of folklore is over one hundred years old and has made phenomenal progress both in Europe and in this country. Yet somehow it has fallen short of the great expectations which its founding fathers envisioned. Folklore has achieved neither the recognition nor the position in the hierarchy of our sciences and school curricula which had been anticipated.

I believe that the chief reason for this is that folklore has failed to develop beyond its original concept and enlarge its field of operation. That concept and that field were satisfactory in the nineteenth century but in our era have proven inadequate. If the aim of folklore be the study of man and his "manner of life," as the Swedish folklorist Sigurd Erixon¹ requires, folklore must not remain confined to the investigation of primitive cultures, the early states of our Western civilization and their present day survivals. Folklore must follow the example of anthropology, which has applied itself with marked success to the study of contemporary Occidental culture.

If the old saying "nomen est omen" was ever true it was in the case of the word "folklore." Neither the term "folklore" which is employed in English and French, nor the German "Volkskunde" nor the Scandinavian "ethnology" were felicitous choices. The term "Volk" was the product of German romanticism; it has never freed itself from a romantic opacity and its dead hand has consistently impeded the progress of the science of folklore. All efforts to define the terms "folk," "folk psychology," "folk culture" have been rather fruitless.² The confusion reached its climax in the Third Reich when the Nazis redefined and exploited folklore for their political purposes. Consequently, at the present time the majority of laymen equate folklore in Western civilization with peasant lore and many professional folklorists acquiesce.

There has been for some time a growing feeling among students of folklore that the term "folklore" has forced the whole discipline into a Procrustean bed and many efforts have been made to correct the situation. Folklorists have

1. Sigurd Erixon, "Regional European Ethnology" in *Folksliv* 1 (1937), 90.

2. The classical formulation of the theory of Volk is H. Naumann, *Grundzuege der deutschen Volkskunde*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1929).

raised the following problems: Is the creation of folklore limited to small communities or do the urban centers generate a folklore of their own?³ Do any social classes other than peasantry produce folklore?⁴ Is our contemporary scientific and technological civilization creating a new folklore?⁵ Is there in addition to nature and religious folklore perhaps a political folklore? No adequate answers to these questions can be found without a clear definition of what constitutes folklore and without a comprehensive formulation of the psychology which underlies it. However, it would be false to give the impression that no endeavors have been made in these directions. The majority of scholars who undertook this task based their efforts either on the theories of ethnopsychologists, W. Wundt and L. Levy-Bruhl, or on the theories of depth-psychologists, S. Freud and C. G. Jung. Although these efforts have contributed greatly to our understanding of the nature of "popular imagination" and the role of symbolism, they have failed in their aims and they did not succeed in expanding the scope of folklore.

The Mythological Mode of Thought

In this article I shall restrict myself to the investigation of beliefs, myths, customs and rites because these form the kernel of folklore and reflect best the psychology which underlies it. Every instance of thinking and behaviour has a definite function: to cope with a problem or to resolve a crisis. There are basically two solutions of a problem or crisis: the rational solution and the emotional solution. The reader is sufficiently familiar with the rational solution which is based on empirical data and reason; this gave rise to science and technology. In this article we shall be preoccupied with the second solution which is usually termed emotional, magical, mythological or mythopoeic. This solution greatly antedates the rational solution, has always been coexistent with it and is the solution which has produced superstitions, myths, folk customs and rites. It can be briefly described as follows: In conditions of acute crisis, individuals and groups often believe themselves confronted with menacing forces beyond their ability to comprehend and conquer. When the fear of threat and tension reach an unbearable degree, imagination replaces reason as the chief organizing force in the interpretation of the situation. Imagination precipitates the still vague fears, frustrations and longings to overcome the crisis, objectifies them and projects them into the surroundings.⁶ These externalizations of extraordinary emotional experience assume a character or even life of their own, become assimilated into the actual world and eventually are mistaken for reality.

3. A. Haberlandt, "Grosstadvolkskunde," Wiener Zeitschrift fuer Volkskunde XI (1935), 18 ff.

4. W. E. Peuckert, Volkskunde des Proletariats (Breslau, 1931).

5. Cf. my article "Is Our Civilization Creating a New Folklore?" Southern Folklore Quarterly XVI (1952), pp. 79 ff.

6. A very useful treatment of the role of imagination is found in René Lacroze, La fonction de l'imagination (Paris, 1938).

To illustrate this process, from the end of the 15th century the Continent of Europe was in the throes of an acute crisis, of a religious, economic, political and social nature. In order to explain and cope with the threat from without, our disturbed ancestors objectified their collective fears and, as a result, conjured the witch-craze which ravaged the Old and parts of the New World for a full three centuries. Today we realize that the witch represented the metamorphosis of the collective fears of our forebears in the face of such vicissitudes of life as adverse weather, accident, sickness, impotence, death among both humans and domestic animals. Hence the notions of the weather-, butter- and milk-witch, of spells of impotence, sickness and death.

It is clear that the mythological mode of thought is crisis-born and crisis-sustained, that it envelops the spheres of human life which are most heavily fraught with uncertainty, danger and threat and that it appears in periods of emergencies. For these very reasons the solution of a problem by superstition and the resolution of a crisis by myth did not continue to be confined to the realms of nature and religion and limited to bygone ages. The mythological mode of thought has continued to operate in the crisis-laden spheres of society and politics and in the critical periods of modern history. To give an example, the French Revolution terrified and mystified the champions of the ancien regime to such an extent that they abandoned their efforts to cope with the upheaval in a rational manner and retreated into the solution of crisis by metamorphosis of their collective fears. They rejected the explanation that the new social forces and the revolutionary bourgeoisie were responsible for the Revolution. Instead, the opponents of the New Order fabricated and disseminated the myth that the French Revolution was the spawn of a monstrous conspiracy of Freemasons whose ultimate aim was the violent overthrow of the existing order, both secular and spiritual, and the establishment of an atheistic World Republic which would enslave all peoples and nations. This myth has lingered on to be recently revitalized in slightly modernized versions by the Nazis and Communists.

If it is true that mountain giants and mermen represent the objectifications of collective fears of evil potentialities of mountains and waters on the part of our ancestors, is it not true by the same token that such political specters as "the Syndicate of World Jewry," "the Jewish Front Organization of Freemasonry," "the Bloody International of Munition Magnates" or the International Red Cross in its role of "Capitalist Master Spy Organization" are objectifications of collective fears and hatreds of Nazi and Communist believers in the face of economic, social and political menace? While the mythological mode of thought has been ebbing from its traditional spheres of nature and religion it has been surging into the realms of society and politics. The chief reason for this unexpected migration is that while nature and religion have become rationalized, less threatening, and divested of mythological elements, the sphere of society has grown increasingly incomprehensible, uncontrollable and ominous to the average man. In consequence, at the present we are living in a period of social superstitions, myths and folklore.

7. Cf. N. H. Webster, The French Revolution: A Study in Democracy (New York, 1920) and E. von Ludendorff, Die Vernichtung der Freimaurer durch Enthuellung ihrer Geheimnisse (Munich, 1927).

The Psychology and Logic of Mythological Thinking

A careful study of superstitions, legends, myths and rites, whether of nature or of a religious or social character, reveals that they are all permeated by the same psychology and logic, which are usually termed affective or mythological. It is beyond the scope of this article to give even an outline of such psychology and logic; it must suffice to sketch a few chief categories and archetypes.

The most important category of mythological thinking is that of animism. Strong emotions, particularly fear, tend to transform profoundly the relationship between subject and object, between man and his surroundings, and create a magical world. In this world familiar phenomena suddenly emerge in a new unique light, assume human attributes and character, become endowed with will and life of their own, fraught with evil potentialities and charged with deep symbolism. Everything distasteful and evil is attributed to the ill will and maliciousness of some human or anthropomorphic agency. For instance, when a member of a primitive community is killed by a falling rock, the relatives of the victim do not blame the rock. Instead, they consult the wise man or woman who with the aid of magic identifies the culprit who bewitched the rock and caused the death. In a similar manner, an orthodox Communist rejects the scientific explanation of the origins of the Second World War, namely that it was the outcome of a complex interaction of numerous economic, political, social and psychological forces. Instead, he brands the War as the monstrous spawn of a carefully planned conspiracy of International Capitalists, masterminded by the sinister Syndicate of Wall Street. As I have mentioned before, while the nature man of old animated his surroundings with a host of mythical beings, the political man of the modern era has activated and dramatized the complex world of economic, political and social phenomena. Modern Nazi and Communist myth-makers vitalized such concepts as race, Volk, state, Capitalism, class struggle, revolution, counterrevolution, and wove a rich political folklore around them.

Another category of mythological thinking is that of dualism. The mythological mind projects his fears, hatreds and longings into the outside world and perceives all phenomena around him as either friendly or hostile. The hostile forces are equated with those of evil and are allegedly engaged in continuous conspiracy, betrayal and subversion with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the existing order. Thus history becomes one monstrous plot, one gigantic struggle between the camps of good and evil. The dualistic category of the mythological mind finds its expression in the concept of a double world. According to this concept, along with the manifest world there exists another secret, invisible one. In the Middle Ages the invisible world was of supernatural character, exemplified in St. Augustine's *Civitas Dei* and *Diaboli*. For a Communist or a Nazi it is the underworld of crypto-Capitalists and crypto-Jews and their machinations.

The category of the dualistic world gives rise to the concepts of the Great Conspiracy, the Last Battle (Armageddon), the Millenium and to the archetypes of the Devil-Scapegoat and the Messiah. A mythological Weltanschauung

8. The best treatment of the categories of mythological thinking are contained in Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (Berlin, 1923-29). The English translation of this work is being published by Yale University.

usually contains all these categories and archetypes. They can be identified in all major mythological systems of the past, for instance, in the Old Persian religion of Zoroaster, in the Old Norse mythology culminating in the Twilight of the Gods, in the Revelation of St. John, in Naziism and Communism. In the modern political mythologies of Communism and Naziism the Devil and the Messiah exhibit a tendency to become corporate, collective personalities, as is the case with the World Proletariat, the Aryan Race, International Capitalism, and World Jewry.

L. Levy-Bruhl⁹ and his followers were mistaken when they asserted that primitive man lacked capacity for logic and that he possessed a prelogical mentality. The truth of the matter is that all mythological thinking, old and modern, is permeated by logic, only the logic of the mythological mind differs somewhat from the rational logic to which we are accustomed. The mythological logic is governed not by causal but by associative thinking. For instance, the medieval Devil was the archsymbol of evil and anything or anybody associated with him became automatically evil. The same principle operates in our society at the present time. If you wish to defame a person all you need to do is to associate him with Communism.

Associative thinking effects profound changes in the laws of cause and effect, of identity and contradiction. The last two do not seem to apply at all to the mythological logic. For instance, in the Middle Ages the Devil could allegedly assume almost any shape, human or animal. In a similar manner, to a Communist his political Devil, the International Capitalist, appears under such incongruous guises as those of a Wall Street Plutocrat, Munition Magnate, Militarist, Fascist, Religious Reactionary; but, also, those of a Socialist, Laborite, pacifist, Trotskite, Titoist, Zionist, Freemason or member of the Salvation Army. In this connection it is worth noting that the mythological mind refuses to recognize development or change in time and believes in metamorphosis instead. This belief applies, curiously enough, to modern political folklore as well. For instance, an orthodox Communist is convinced that Trotsky, Beria and Tito have been from the very beginning Capitalist stooges and agents.

Mythological Behaviour

Originally the great majority of students of folklore were philologists who relied too heavily on literary sources and often neglected the fact that man is primarily a creature of action, that thinking is inseparable from behaviour, and that it is usually acted out. This shortcoming was remedied by anthropologists who demonstrated that every belief and myth had a corresponding custom and ritual and that very often beliefs and myths were mere verbalizations and rationalizations of customs and rituals which antedated them.

The chief reason for the sway which the mythological thought has exerted over the masses through the ages, and for the inability of reason to exorcise myth is that the solution of crisis by myth possesses certain advantages over the rational solution. Man objectifies his extraordinary emotional experience and, by so doing, explains in concrete form the causes and nature of the crisis.

9. L. Levy-Bruhl, Primitive Mentality (New York, 1923).

By concrete form I mean that the mythological mind always ascribes causes to some human or humanlike agency. This leads to the identification of the guilty responsible for the evil. The identification of the scapegoat in turn permits individuals and groups to obtain relief from an unbearable emotional tension, to act out their pent-up fears and frustrations and to transform them into specific hatreds, defamation and aggression directed against the scapegoat. Simultaneously, the mythological imagination usually identifies the leader, the Messiah who will conquer the evil, punish the culprits and redeem the suffering. It is therefore hardly surprising that the mythological mentality in its dealing with emotional issues exhibits a definite distaste for scientific explanation which necessarily operates with abstract, impersonal and multiple causes. As I have pointed out before, in connection with the category of animism, while the scientific mind poses the question "how," the mythological mind is obsessed with the desire to discover "who."

It is evident that the secret of the success and of the immortality of mythological behaviour is that it provides a solution of crisis which enables individuals and groups to act out their pent-up emotions. In a situation of acute crisis there is no stronger urge on the part of individuals than that towards action and there is no more effective integration of a group than by aggression against the scapegoat and by the cult of a charismatic leader. Unfortunately no metamorphosis of powerful emotions, particularly of fear, can remain restricted to the level of thoughts alone. Fears must be acted out and, consequently, every large scale metamorphosis of collective fears in our civilization has been accompanied by a large scale outbreak of persecution and violence.

Conclusion

The clarification of the nature of folklore and the formulation of the psychology which underlies it, perhaps along the lines which I have suggested in this article, will enlarge the concept and the sphere of operation of folklore so that the discipline will be able to deal with beliefs, myths, customs and rites of contemporary Western society. Such a revitalized science of folklore will reveal that mythological behaviour is not a matter of primitive civilizations or of bygone ages but that every acute crisis tends to effect a mass regression from the light of reason and science to the twilight of myth and ritual. It will also throw a fresh light on modern totalitarian movements and demonstrate that theirs is the primitive and archaic solution of crisis by the metamorphosis of collective fears, by myth and scapegoat. This is fairly obvious in the case of Nazism but not so evident in the case of Communism where the mythological nucleus is cleverly camouflaged by an imposing superstructure of dialectical materialism and other rationalizations. It is necessary to transform folklore from the lore of the folk to the science of man's non-rational mythological behaviour.

Editor's Note: The March, 1956, Bulletin will carry an article in which Dr. Rysan applies his system of folklore to the "Solution by Scapegoat."

TESTS OF FOLKLORICITY APPLIED TO SOLDIER SONGS*

By Harold R. W. Benjamin
George Peabody College for Teachers

Let us start with a rough definition: A folk song is one made up by the folks who sing it.

This is not a very rigorous or elegant concept, but perhaps it is workable for present purposes. Those purposes are to apply tests of folkloricity to certain songs of the American soldier. Let us make a laboratory analysis of some of these songs.

I suppose that many bugle songs are strictly products of the folks, in this case the troops themselves, the enlisted men, not the officers, not the officers' wives, not the war correspondents, and certainly not the patriotic lyricists. Every American knows at least one of these sets of words to accompany the bugle march:

"You're in the Army now,
"You're not behind a plow;
"You _____,
"You'll never get rich;
"You're in the Army now."

Applying the test of content, it is impossible to attribute these words to the officers, to the colonel's or general's lady (who in the old days was responsible for too many pseudo-soldier songs), or to a music-hall writer. Such people would not use such language in a song. Not only are these words too plain and rough for an officer, an officer's wife, or a civilian desiring ordinary social approval; they are also somewhat subversive. Only the folks had these words and the spirit to say them.

Anyone who was a soldier of the United States Regular Army forty years ago knows that here in this song are enlisted men speaking with grim pride in a poverty-stricken status; a pride founded also, however, on full consciousness of superior professional attainments. They did not say, "We finally caught Geronimo; we whipped the Gugas; we are the men who scaled the wall at Peking. We are the Regulars. We trace our military descent from Mad Anthony Wayne's Continentals, from the soldiers who took Stony Point with the bayonet against His Majesty's Grenadier Guards. We are the professionals who stand and fight when the militia break and run and squeal for quarter. We are the doughfeet who dust off the enemy at a thousand yards and then close to slug him toe-to-toe. We are the wagon soldiers who roll the caissons for the King of Battles. We are the troopers who put the print of our horses' hooves on hostile backs. We are the best of our kind in all the world."

*Paper read to Annual Meeting, Tennessee Folklore Society, Nashville, Tennessee, November 5, 1955.

No, they would not say that. An officer might, especially a general. A war correspondent might. A politician would be bound to say it, if he could put the words together.

But not the folks, the soldiers themselves. They speak their pride more indirectly and more artistically. They start with expressions common in the drill-sergeant's arsenal for a long time, probably since Queen Annie's War more than two centuries ago. You're in the Army now! Chest out! Gut in! Heads up! Hup - two - three - four! Hup! Hup! Pick up your tut-tut feet! You're not behind a plow! Get that hay out of your ears!

So we have the first two lines from the sergeants. Then the privates add their Bitter two-cents' worth. Thirteen dollars a month, fifteen dollars, or maybe twenty-one dollars with one full hitch behind you and an expert rifleman's badge. What's the difference? If you wanted to get rich, why did you join the Army?

Applying the test of content to mess call, Soupy, soupy, without a single bean; assembly, There's a major in the grass; adjutant's call, Oh, Mary Ann! Oh! Mary Ann!; the bugle march, What you gonna do when the guard-house gets you? and several other calls, we find them all meeting the test of content. Indeed most of them are so much in the language of the soldier that I cannot possibly sing them to this audience.

We have also what may be called a test of form. When a music-hall writer, an officer, the general's wife, or almost any other non-folk individual makes up a song he usually has some notion of internal consistency, coherence, plot or the like. The folks do not worry about such things. They sing what they feel like singing. The last two lines of one conventional words of assembly, for example, constitute a truly magnificent non sequitur. (I bowdlerize this as best I can.)

"There's a major in the grass,
"And I guess he's gonna pass,
"Cuss 'em all, cuss 'em all,
"Cuss 'em all but six!"

Of course there are traditional words for certain other calls which fail to meet any tests of folkloricity. You have all heard the sentimental Soldier rest, free from care lyric to accompany taps, which is obviously an "art" product.

Let us look at the very old set of words for stable call:

"Haste down to the stable
"As soon as you're able
"And feed those old horses
"Some hay and some corn,
"Hurry up now you bloody recruits,
"Shake a leg there and pull on your boots;
"For if you don't do it
"The colonel will know it,
"And then you will rue it
"As sure as you're born."

I believe this is a song made by officers and probably by British officers at that. I do not think that soldiers in America, even in the eighteenth century, said, "Haste down to the stable," or predicted that anybody would "rue" anything. "Hurry up," and "Shake a leg" are almost equally suspect, the one being the civilian form of "double time" and the other smelling of the Navy. In the old Army, furthermore, officers said, "Recruit," but soldiers called a new comrade, "John."

Enough of the monotonous bugle songs. Let us look at an old soldier song that is more complete, one that certainly goes back to the days of the Royal American Regiment.

"How happy the soldier who lives on his pay
"And spends half a crown out of sixpence a day,
"Who fears neither justices, warrants, nor bums,
"But pays all his debts with the roll of his drums,
"With a row-de-dow, row-de-dow, row-de-dow-dow.
"And pays all his debts with the roll of his drums."

"He cares not a marmedy how the world goes,
"The King finds him quarters and money and clothes,
"A fig for all trouble; whenever it comes
"He rattles away with the roll of his drums
"With a-row-de-dow, row-de-dow, row-de-dow-dow,
"He rattles away with the roll of his drums."

"His drum is his glory, his joy and delight,
"It leads him to pleasure as well as to fight,
"No girl when she hears it, though ever so glum
"But packs up her tatters and follows the drum;
"With a row-de-dow, row-de-dow, row-de-dow-dow,
"She packs up her tatters and follows the drum."

The content of this song is officer-civilian. "Justices, warrants, and bums"; "A fig for all trouble"; "His drum is his glory"; there is hardly a line that is in the language of the common soldier.

The test of form is equally conclusive. The song is put together with music-hall consistency.

Consider another song a little later in origin.

"Roll out ye Continentalers, we're goin' for to go
"To fight the red-coat enemy who're plaguey cute,
you know;
"With a too-rah-loo-rah-laddy and a too-rah-loo-
rah-lay,
"We can whip the lousy lobster-backs and do it any
day."

"Ho! Strike up music! Forward march! We're goin'
for to travel;
"Captain! I wants to halt a bit; me shoes is full
o' gravel!
"With a too-rah-loo-rah-laddy and a too-rah-loo-
rah-lay,

"We can whip the lousy lobster-backs and do it
any day."

"Hup! Carry arms! That's right, my boys. Now
p'int yer toes, Bob Rogers;

"See, yonder are the red-coat men; let fly upon 'em,
sojers!"

This song may have had help from officers or civilians in its making. Its form is fairly consistent. But obviously the folks took it over and made its content rather soldierly. The one line, "Captain! I wants to halt a bit; me shoes is full of gravel," emphatically meets the test of content. Nobody but a foot soldier would think of that line. Yet there are other lines that are probably borrowed; e.g., "With a too-rah-loo-rah-laddy."

There is a third evidence of folkloricity that I have not yet mentioned. This is the test of direct observation by primary witnesses. Consider this song of 1916-17.

"Oh, the blues ain't nothin' Babe, but a good man feelin' bad;
"I got the Army blues, Babe, and I'm feelin' might sad;
"I got the Army blues, Babe, I got a caisson on my mind,
"I got a gal in Juarez, Babe, but I left that gal behind.
"It takes a tall, slim, black-haired gal to make a preacher
lay his Bible down;
"It takes a tall, slim, black-haired gal to make a bull-
dog bust his chain;
"There's a troop-ship a-waitin' and a-swingin' on the tide,
"If the train don't go I got a mule to ride;
"It takes a tall, slim, black-haired gal to make a preacher
lay his Bible down."

This, as many of you will recognize, is a civilian song, a folk-song, I think. I watched it being metamorphosed in the Army. I have heard at least twenty variations, but the military contributions are always there.

"My daddy's blind, Babe, and my mammy cannot see;
"My home ain't here, Babe, it's back in Tennessee.
"I got the Army blues, Babe, I got a caisson on my mind.
"I got a gal in Brest, Babe, but I left that gal behind.
"It takes..." etc.

The soldiers were the same sort of folks who made up this song in the first place, and they kept what they liked. I heard boys put in, "To make a gunner lay his quadrant down," for example, but that never caught on. The soldiers preferred, "To make a preacher lay his Bible down."

Let us look at a song now that certainly meets the test of direct observation, for it is one I heard being constructed step by step. It was once the slogairn or battle song of the 17th U. S. Field Artillery.

"A fly flew into a grocery store,
Sing do-si-do-do-do;
He flew right in through the open door,
Sing do-si-do-do-do;

He ate some cheese, he ate some ham,
He wiped his feet on the grocery man,
The s-o-b had nothing else to do."

This first stanza is obviously a civilian borrowing. Furthermore, it meets the content test of civilian folkloricity. I have bowdlerized it a little, and the omitted words are very folksy. It does not so clearly meet the form test. It is rather logically constructed.

The other stanzas were certainly made by the wagon soldiers of the 17th Regiment. I quote only two of perhaps forty stanzas.

"First sergeant he did pretty well,
Sing do-si-do-do-do;
First sergeant he did pretty well,
Sing do-si-do-do-do;
First sergeant he did pretty well,
He shoved the battery clean to hell,
The s-o-b had nothing else to do.

Where in the h--l is Silver Plate?
Sing do-si-do-do-do;
Where in the h--l is Silver Plate?
Sing do-si-do-do-do;
Where in the h--l is Silver Plate?
I think that b-----d pulled his freight,
The s-o-b had nothing else to do."

The reference to a particular first sergeant's unfortunate maneuver, and the bitter jibe at the colonel--commanding, under cover of his nick-name, were understandable only to the folks and hence furnish an indisputable content test.

The form test does not demonstrate folkloricity with these stanzas. Each of them is quite logically constructed. As between the two stanzas, however, the soldier inconsistency becomes readily apparent.

These three tests of folkloricity: (1) the test of content, (2) the test of form, and (3) the test of direct observation of construction, are applied here only to the words of the songs, of course. Any test of folkloricity for melodies is a somewhat different matter which I will not attempt to treat in this paper.

The direct observation test would be the most reliable one, of course, provided always that the witness is trustworthy. The old soldier's tendency to lie gaudily about his experiences must be borne in mind by students of folklore as well as by historians.

The content test is infallible, provided the student knows the folks and their periods well enough, but that again is often a difficult standard to meet.

The form test is a tricky one. It, too, is hard to estimate, and sometimes it does not seem to fit a known folk song. As supporting evidence, however,

it often clinches a song's claim to folklore status.

In conclusion, let us apply these three tests to a song which was undoubtedly sung by American soldiers, but not by United States soldiers.

By the content test we can date this song about 1866. It was made by Confederate veterans. The language was definitely of the Western part of the Confederacy, although the composers probably fought in the Army of Northern Virginia, very possibly in the ranks of John Hood's Texans.

No officers took part in making this song. Note that in the first stanza the war was not fought over slavery or the sacred rights of the sovereign states. It was fought for "Ole Marse Robert." The grim military bitterness, especially in the last stanza, is enough to show that no pussy-footed civilian had a hand in these remarks.

The somewhat fantastic casualty figures mentioned in that last stanza have always seemed to me to be in themselves strong evidence of folkloricity. Only the folks are so careless of facts.

The test of form is also conclusive. Those Rebel doughfeet had only one main theme, "Damn the Yankees." The rest of the song was tossed together according to the momentary exigencies of rhyme and hatred.

Although I knew a number of Confederate veterans who sang this song, I never heard one testify that he knew who made it up. I conclude, therefore, that the test of direct observation is not available in this case.

"I fit for Ole Marse Robert Lee
Three year about,
Wounded in four places,
And starved at Point Lookout;
And I cotched the rheumatiz
A-campin' in the snow,
But I kilt a chance o' Yankees,
And I wish I'd kilt some mo'.

Chorus

"I'm a good old Rebel,
That's what I am
And for your Land of Freeddom, Boys,
I don't give a damn;
I'm glad I fought agin her,
And I only wish we'd won,
And I don't ax any pardon
For anythin' I done.

"I hate your Constitution
And your mighty eagle, too,
I hate your Freedmen's Bureau
And your niggers dressed in blue;
I hate your Glorious Banner
And all that bunkum fuss,
You lyin', thievin' Yankees,
I hate you wuss and wuss.

(Chorus)

"I won't be reconstructed,
I'm a better man than them,
And for a carpet-bagger, Boys,
I don't give a damn;
I'm off to the frontier
As soon as I kin go;
I'll prepare me a weapon
And start for Mexico.

(Chorus)

"Nine hundred thousand Yankees
Lie sleepin' in the dust;
It took four years of fightin'
For them to conquer us;
They died of Southern fever
And of Southern shot and shell;
I wish they'd been ten million more,
G-d d--n their souls to h--ll!"

(Chorus)

MAYBE DAY LETTER

By Kelsie B. Harder
Youngstown University
Youngstown, Ohio

During the summer of 1955, I collected the following folk item pertaining to the first day of May. My informant, a resident of Cedar Creek Community, Perry County, Tennessee, for some seventy years, stated that formerly girls were supposed to receive a Maybe Day Letter on the first day of May from boy friends. She dictated from memory one of the letters that she received around 1900:

Grape vine warp
Pine top fillin'
Me and you'll marry
If pap and mam's willin'
Maybe we will
Maybe we won't
Maybe we can't

Maybe we'll have a home
Maybe we won't
Maybe we'll have children
Maybe we won't
Maybe I'll make a home
Maybe I won't.

My informant could not remember more lines than those given above. I was told, however, that a maybe was a "great long letter, all lines except first ones beginning with 'maybe.'" The girls would all "look to get a 'maybe' on first of May." The letter was seldom signed, since the girl was supposed to divine the name of the sender, if she did not know already.

The custom, of course, does not survive in the community, but, no doubt, older inhabitants in other areas would remember the letters. I have not been able, however, to find another example.

THE KING OF THE WILD FRONTIER vs. OLD HICKORY?

By Julian Mason
Bristol, Tennessee

Last year this publication carried an article on the use of folklore in advertising. Since that time I have seen many more uses of folklore in advertising. I suppose the foremost recent example has been the exploitation to the fullest extent of the legends of Davy Crockett.

We have seen the advent of Davy Crockett tee-shirts, Davy Crockett books, Davy Crockett toys, Davy Crockett movies, and even Davy Crockett wallpaper, to mention only a few items. The use of folklore in advertising is still a good business practice, and probably always will be. Especially is it so when one can utilize the name or legend of a formerly real live folk hero. (One of the most picturesque uses which I observed during the past year was the label from a jar of "William Byrd Preserves.")

The United States Treasury Department is very much aware of the value of folklore in its advertising. I have been interested in observing how the Treasury Department has used folklore in its full-page ads sponsored by local merchants in my hometown newspaper, The Enterprise, of Williamston, North Carolina. The most interesting one in the series to date appeared on July 7, 1955. The entire ad was built around Andrew Jackson and a tall tale concerning him. The odd thing about the tale, however, was that it is a tale usually told concerning Davy Crockett.

A similar tale, supposedly told by Crockett on himself during an election campaign, is recorded by B. A. Botkin on page nineteen of his A Treasury of American Folklore; but as he records it, it was Davy Crockett grinning, instead of Andrew Jackson staring. He records no similar tale about Old Hickory.

Why the United States Treasury Department decided upon this particular ad as it appeared in The Enterprise, with an illustration of the event which takes up more space than the wording, I don't know. (Incidentally, folklore lends itself very well to pictures: for example in the same ad, there is a small picture of a Minute Man at the bottom of the ad, under the slogan, "Safe as America.")

Perhaps the Department decided to appeal to the conventional American competition and renew the well known, historically proved "feud" between Davy and Andy. Maybe the government didn't like a mere Congressman's getting more favorable and enduring publicity than a President. Maybe the government has the inside story through The Congressional Record, the Department of the Interior, or something. The Treasury Department's ad is now a fait accompli, however; and maybe a contest can be arranged between Jackson and Crockett, wherever they are (or maybe in between).

Here is the tale, a la Treasury:

"The Raccoon That Wouldn't Come Down"

They said old Andrew Jackson was so fierce he could stare a raccoon out of a tree.

So (the story goes) a friend made a bet on it. And "Old Hickory," who could be as obliging as he was terrifying, set out to help his friend win.

One night he and the financially interested parties went into the moonlit woods. They spotted their game, a small round silhouette high on a limb.

Fixing his baleful eye on the target, Andrew Jackson stared. He scowled. He glowered. He glared all night--but the raccoon never came down.

Even so, Andrew Jackson hadn't failed. For at sunup the men saw that what he had been staring at wasn't a raccoon after all, but a huge knot on the tree. And he had stared some of the bark off that!

A tall story. But no taller than the man, born 188 years ago, about whom it was told. For rough, tough Andrew Jackson--soldier at 13, senator at 30, major general at 35, and our seventh president at the climax of his career--was one of the true giants of our nation's youth. Personally fearless, relentless toward his enemies, but self-reliant, honest and straightforward, he was the very embodiment of the early American spirit.

That spirit is as vital today as it was then. And you are an active part of it every time you invest in another United States Savings Bond.

[And so on, for two more paragraphs.]

SWITCHING FOR WATER*

By E. G. Rogers
Tennessee Wesleyan College

It is perhaps as axiomatic to say that there is a "water-witch" in every family as to say that any animal born with its eyes closed may go mad. The literal meaning of this may account for the frequency with which the peachtree switch is used in seeking for the hidden, underground stream as well as in the correction of the truant child. The practice of "switching" for water is a rather frequent skill with a believing number of individuals.

The selection of a desirable location for a well was once considered most essential to family health. As much attention later came to be given to this as was formerly given to the matter of selecting a well-protected spring near which the pioneer home was to be built on the hillside. And so there is still quite a number of individuals, both men and women, whose services are sought when a spot is to be chosen for the location of a well.

Areas Sampled

The practices and illustrations treated here are gathered from Sumner, Smith, Putnam, and White counties of the Middle Tennessee area and from Bradley, Polk, McMinn, Meigs, and Monroe counties of East Tennessee. There are a few multiple occurrences reported from without these areas by persons now living within the areas. A further sampling will reveal that certain modifications of the practice are rather general and widespread.

Kind and Nature of the Wood Used

The majority of persons claiming to possess the power of "water witching" suggests that the forked twig be cut from any kind of growing tree which produces a fruit bearing a stone. The order of preference therefore seems to be a peachtree, plum, dogwood, and apple. However, other kinds of woods are chosen depending upon the particular locality and the traditional practice within that locality. Recently a farmer demonstrated his ability to locate the mysterious stream by trimming down a blackgum fork from an overhanging limb. He observed meanwhile that peachtree usually works much better. One person suggested the use of willow. Others suggest that any kind of wood will do just so it is pliable and flexible. One person however was willing to demonstrate just how he would prepare the forked prong, but would make no effort to locate an underground stream with it since, for him, the wood had to be peachtree.

*Editor's note: In view of the widespread interest in "dowsing" generated by Kenneth Roberts in His Seventh Sense (New York: Doubleday, 1953), and his earlier Henry Gross and His Dowsing Rod (New York: Doubleday, 1951), there appears to be a special point in having such a report as this from Tennessee.

How the Switch Is Prepared

A branch with forked prongs is cut so as to leave some four to six inches to that part beyond the conjunction of the prongs. The length of the entire switch should be from eighteen to twenty inches. A shorter switch will work, even as short as one with eight inch prongs, but with proportionate difficulty. The branches are cut to an even length and are trimmed free of other branches. A few persons use a single switch cut some four to six inches shorter. The branches must be green and freshly cut.

Who May Switch for Water

This is a moot question. Most persons seek for an elderly person. This preference may involve the factor of experience, or it may indicate that many younger persons do not wish their friends to know that they lean toward any practice which cannot or has not been adequately and scientifically explained. As one young lady in a college class remarked, "I have tried it, and I know it works. It works for me. But please don't tell the class. They would not believe it if they saw it." There are some who connect "waterwitching" with "power doctors," and yet the greater majority do not try to explain it at all --they just go ahead using their knowledge or skill in helping a neighbor locate a spot to dig his well where a sufficient supply of water may be found. There are many for whom it "just will not work." Others say they could not do it until a practiced person taught them.

Holding the Switch

The free ends of the forked prongs are held with the wrists upward and the thumbs pointing horizontally outward so that the loose ends of the prongs will extend three or four inches beyond the thumbs. The switch is thus rigidly held so that the larger end of the fork will extend upward and slightly forward. Another method is to hold it in a somewhat similar position except that the palms of the hands are downward. Still a third way is used by those who prefer the single straight switch. The switch in this case is held by the smaller end in a single hand allowing the switch to extend forward horizontally while it is held between the extended forefinger and thumb.

Illustrations of Use and Practice

The individual with a switch so prepared and so held then starts walking slowly in the vicinity of the desired well's location. The presence and location of water is determined by "the pull" on the switch downward. The stronger the stream the more forceful the downward pull.

The following account is given by Mrs. Margaret Lowe of Athens, McMinn County, as told to her by her grandfather, the Rev. A. B. Rose, of how waterwitching was practiced by his brother. "He used a peachtree 'witching stick' cut in the usual manner of a fork. The stick begins to turn downward when one is over water, and points straight down at the place where the water is nearest the surface."

"Then," says Mrs. Lowe, "after listening to my grandfather explain about his brother, I decided to try it for myself. After he had prepared the switch and showed me how to hold it, I decided to prove for myself whether waterwitching will work. My brother led me around with my eyes closed so that I could not come upon a predetermined spot or location. The switch pointed downward at an exact spot where it had pointed before. At one time I decided not to let the stick turn in my hands. I held it as tightly as possible. Again there was a definite pull on the stick. And the tighter I held, the harder was the pull. I did not move my hands, but one of the branches broke off at a joint. And I have learned for myself that waterwitching is possible. I know, for it worked for me."

Says Janette Cheek of Benton, Polk County, "We had a well dug last summer by a man called General Moates. He used a 'witching stick' to locate the well. He asked whether he might dig the well in the most likely place according to their findings. When we agreed they began walking over the back yard in a criss-cross manner much like the spokes in a wheel to establish the closest proximity of water. At the spot where the stick showed the greatest downward pull, they began to dig. Water was found within six inches of the depth which had been predetermined."

Bill Akins of McMinn County tells of a Mr. Kennedy, a farmer of the Pond Hill community, who decided to locate a well convenient to his dairy barn. With his peachtree switch, he started walking within the vicinity of the spot where he wished to have a well dug. In a very favorable location the twig began to pull toward the ground. He hired a well-digger and water was found at the spot which the twig had indicated. His neighbors, however, doubted."

Norma Jean Kyle of Meigs County quotes a Mr. Jones as saying that the pull for him was often so strong that the bark would twist in his hands. According to him, this method never fails to strike water. Paul Conner of Englewood reports this definition of waterwitching as given to him by Jake Perry: "Waterwitching as I understand it is the passing art of finding an underground stream with a forked, freshly-cut, peachtree branch." Jane Ann Vineyard of Sweetwater, Monroe County, reports a Mr. George A. Roy of the Christianburg community who has been waterwitching for his neighbors for the past forty years. Mr. Roy holds the switch so that it turns toward him as it points downward for the "pull."

A Mr. Smith of Cookeville, Putnam County, reports that he switches with one hand by gripping the small end of the switch between the thumb and forefinger, letting the end of the switch rest against the palm. The switch is extended in a horizontal position and forward as he starts walking. When water is found, the loose end of the switch will start vibrating vertically. This will continue for a longer or shorter time depending upon the strength of the stream. Horizontal vibrations indicate depth.

How Depth Is Determined

Mr. Smith, just referred to above, says that each complete horizontal vibration indicates one foot in depth to which the well must be dug. When the exact depth is reached, the switch will again vibrate vertically.

Mrs. L. Dosser of Calhoun reports a Mr. Potter who determines depth by using a single straight switch, although he used the forked switch to locate the stream. He counts the total number of vibrations as the number of feet in depth to which the well must be dug.

Clifford O'Dell of Monroe County reports an eighty-year old water wizard as practicing a unique way of determining the depth of the stream. He judges the depth of the water by the number of buds or branches on the switch being used. This number is multiplied by two in determining depth.

In the Janette Cheek account the depth was determined by holding a straight peachtree switch over the spot where water had been located. The number of vibrations before the switch came to a stop was forty-two. Water was found at forty-two and one-half feet. Mrs. Lowe says that the distance from the first indication of "pull" to the downward point is the distance one will have to dig to reach water.

Switching for Other Substances

The "divining rod" used in locating minerals, the Geiger Counter for uranium, and the "salt test" for the presence of oil in the West are common knowledge. There are a few persons however who also claim that they have the power of determining the location of other substances in the same manner as they switch for water. A Mr. Pole Parker on the headwaters of Dixon Creek in Smith County has the reputation of being able to locate gold or other metals through the use of a similar switch. It is related of him that by such means he once located a five-dollar gold piece which had been lost in a corn crib.

HEARD IN THE SOUTH

By Gordon R. Wood
University of Chattanooga

Readers of the September 1955 issue of the Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin must surely have been delighted with the tale, "De Wull Er De Wust." Here, as in any well recorded folk tale, we find complete understanding and sympathy between teller and listener. And that sense of understanding surely must bring us to ask the question, "How authentic is this tale as a reflection of actual language?" Indeed a whole series of questions come upon us: Is this a true picture of one sort of Southern Negro speech? When was it a true picture and for how long? What is its place in the development of our native tongue? And how can we discover the pronunciation of these words which ordinary print must necessarily misrepresent?

To these questions we can give no very full answer. About all that anyone can do at this stage is to hint at some of the elements in Negro speech in the South and suggest some of the more obvious things that need detailed exploration. Naturally this kind of investigation will require good sense and tact, just as any inquiry into language habits requires these things. A single wrong

move and the immediate search must stop. We might recall an experience which Lorenzo D. Turner recounts in his discussion of his search for Africanisms in the Gullah dialect. He and Dr. Lowman were interviewing a Gullah speaker. "During an interview with one of my informants Dr. Lowman unintentionally used a tone of voice which the informant resented. Instantly the interview ended. Apologies were of no avail. The informant refused to utter another word." The course of history has made the subject of Negro speech one to be handled with the same kind of understanding that we find in "De Wull Er De Wust."

We can try to recapture those days when slaves from Angola, Nigeria, the Gold Coast and the Ivory Coast and from other places in Africa first worked for white planters--the blacks cut off from each other by the barriers of their own native languages and from the white by the barrier of his. Unless we are luckier than we have any reason to hope to be, we will never know, except in the imagination, how the slave came to learn his master's speech. We have no evidence that the master took any pains to teach it. And we can guess that the whole thing was a matter of catch as catch can. If luck is with us, some notebook will turn up some day with detailed discussions of the ways in which white and black speakers crossed this seemingly absolute barrier to communication. The chances for such a thing to happen seem pretty remote.

The next stage, a kind of tentative combination of English and African patterns, is found in Gullah which is a speech of the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia. The circumstances of slave settlement kept many African elements alive and served to establish the kind of African-English amalgam which has survived into this century. For a very clear discussion of these circumstances the reader should consult Turner's Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949). The very vigorous survival of this kind of English has enabled Professor Turner to make recordings of the usage of native speakers and then compare their speech traits with those of persons speaking African languages.

We can consider ourselves fortunate in both the survival of this stage and the thorough study which has been given to it. Using Turner as my guide, and adjusting his information to the limitations of my typewriter (it does not have phonetic symbols), let us consider what some of these African traits are. First, there is word order. English has a big earthquake; Gullah and the West African languages have earthquake big. Plurals are formed by the use of numeral adjectives--five dog--or by the use of certain pronouns them boy. And English and Gullah have different views about what the verb should show. English speakers go to some pains to show differences in the time events, our verbs serving to give distinct clues about the time. Gullah finds such a concern with time to be pointless. The English speaker goes to great lengths to choose between What did you do? What have you done? What had you done? and What were you doing? The Gullah lets been serve him and save him from making all these fine distinctions--Wat youn been do? takes care of nearly every situation.

1. Lorenzo D. Turner, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (University of Chicago, 1949), pp. 11-12.

We need not discuss that very difficult matter, the differences in intonation patterns between the two groups. But we can point to combinations of sound which are not common to English. Of the possible combinations of consonant sounds, we do not use all of them by any means. One which we do not use is the ny- of nyebe, the Gullah word for lima bean. What I have typed as ny- might also have been typed gn, for it is the sound spelled gn in the French agneau. In Gullah words, and so in African, it is a familiar combination. Its force is such that it is found even in English words which have been carried over into Gullah as in nyuze and nyoun, being substituted for use and young. Other special consonant combinations are mp, nt, ngd, and ngg at the beginning of words. When the English speaker borrows the Gullah mpinda, he alters it to his own language patterns and calls it pinder. But under some rather rare conditions the native English speaker approximates some of the African consonant combinations. What I wrote as ngg is what some of us say in lawn ngisland though the rest of us solemnly declare that that is a barbaric mispronunciation of Long Island.

I do not wish to misrepresent Gullah. It is well along the way in its movement from African patterns to English patterns. As an illustration we can consider these lines from the Lord's prayer: Ou'h Fara who aht in hewum, hallowed be di name, di kingdom come, di will be done on uht as it done in hewum. The form as it done shows the absence of a need for to be and its equivalents, a condition found in many languages. As you can easily notice, d sounds occur where th sounds are commonly expected in standard speech. This substitution may have come from what the African heard the English speaker say or thought he heard him say. It is rather like our own experience with the French trilled r or the guttural German g. As for the vowels, Fara, aht, hallowed have the a sound of father; but name comes close to the a of cane.²

The language of our will-of-the-wisp story, however, is not Gullah. Rather it is a development of Negro speech in which the African element has disappeared and has been replaced by some white influence or other. The kind of white influence will vary widely from one part of the South to the next. It is indeed possible that the kind of language used in many places was a brand of pidgin English. We know that white men spoke pidgin English to the Indians and expected the Indians to reply in the same language. A current study of American Pidgin English gives this among many quotations to show how the white man talked to the Indian: "You, you big constable, quick you catch um Jeremiah Offscow, strong you hold um, safe you bring um afore me, Waban, Justice Peace.--Tie um all up, and whip um plaintiff, and whip um 'fendant, and whip um witness." Some of the traits of this pidgin are the absence of final r from such words as poor, the loss of sounds such as the de of defendant, and the substitution of d for th to produce den, dey, or dis.³ Such a white practice in speaking, to red men would serve or could serve as a guide in speaking to black men. The difficulty with this explanation is that it lacks evidence. If there are any allusions to the use of pidgin English when whites and blacks talked with each other, I would like to know about them. Our understanding of the course of Negro speech will be greatly helped by the discovery of evidence which either

2. Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-31..

3. Douglas Leechman and Robert A. Hall, Jr., "American Pidgin English," *American Speech*, XXV, No. 3 (1955), 163-171, especially 164-65.

supports or refutes this opinion that some kinds of Negro speech derive from white pidgin English.

As opportunity permitted, the Negro speakers moved toward speech habits which were held in esteem. An early example of this desire to accept the white folklore of correctness is preserved in the diary of William Johnson, a free Negro in antebellum Natchez.⁴ Born in slavery and later set free, he was largely self taught. His diary is a record of the thinking of a Negro who established for himself a respected place in the plantation world. And he wrote that he would follow the customs of the "most wealthy and intelligent part of this Community." Part of that choice involved reading or at least subscribing to a large number of papers and magazines. And since it was a point of elegance among the wealthy and intelligent to drop an occasional French phrase, William Johnson now and then dropped one in his diary.

But what of the language of this self-taught man? In the written record of October 18, 1839, we read "I took...both of the Horses and went though the thicket." His capitalization is free and easy. It's though that puzzles us. The editors of the diary could have slipped. The diarist himself could have made that kind of small mistake. Or he could have written it that way because he heard it that way; today you can hear Southerners say though rather than through, losing an r with no difficulty at all. To return to the diary, in August 1846 we find him first using forms of the socially accepted dialect and then forms of sub-standard dialects. "I went" and "Johnson was at work" are quite proper. "Billy & Phill goes down" or "The Catapillers is said to have made their appearance" or "I pays" or "Jeff and Frank and Jack was shingles or shingling the old part of the House" are not quite so proper. And then there are spellings such as rather for rather. The additional r may reflect Johnson's own pronunciation and possibly that of the planter families of Natchez as well. So his special verb patterns may come from the same high society. We have to be most cautious in drawing conclusions from Johnson's prose without having the benefit of other contemporary evidence. We cannot be sure in all details that a particular usage is socially elegant in Johnson's day; it may be simply an earlier and less sophisticated usage that has crept into his writing. My hasty impression of his diary is that the better part of his usage is correct according to twentieth century standards.

While we have abundant evidence about word choice and sentence structure, we have few satisfactory clues about Johnson's actual pronunciation. We may be able to recapture it from twentieth century informants. At least we have the procedures of Professor Sumner Ives. Using the techniques of modern dialect study, Ives has sought to answer the question "Did Uncle Remus talk like that?" His studies have been quite important in showing the pronunciation of the language in Joel Chandler Harris' writings. Similar procedures could be used to determine the pronunciation of William Johnson's words. Or for that matter the words of the narrator in "De Wull Er De Wust." In all three sources we find that our conventional spellings give little or no clue to the sound of the words themselves.

⁴William Johnson's Natchez, edited by William R. Hogan and Edwin A. Davis (Louisiana University Press, 1951).

If William Johnson could have heard the story of the will-of-the-wisp as told in our Bulletin, he would surely have felt that he should avoid its dialect traits. And the opening of the folk tale itself shows Negro children reading and writing in school. The forces of education here, as with white children, will seek to change little Henry's way of speaking to a different way. His dialect, that of a mother and son living to themselves in a one-room cabin in the back yard of a white family, will be changed to a dialect that has a better social standing. He will come to scorn the words of his mother--"dat teacher is so young dat..."

But let us take a sentence or so as typical of the speaker's whole dialect: "Dat teacher is so young dat she never did git wid de folkses w'at knowed. I haint never heard dat dere be's Niggers now w'at eats people up an' wus got de name of cannon-balls." Some words we can ignore because they are nearly alike in sophisticated and in rural speech--is, she, people, up and got. For other words the spelling may be the listener's convention rather than the speaker's. Thus tescher and never do not actually tell us that the final sound was a clear r rather than the un which is supposed to be found there all through the South. The spelling w'at is a puzzle. Certainly we must suppose that it is a spelling for something other than our conventional hwat or hwut. At the same time it seems odd that a mid-Western wut would be found in Tennessee fifty years ago among Negro speakers. Even more difficult is the pronunciation of wus, a progressive shortening of what has to whuts. As for heard, the range of Southern pronunciations of that word is so wide that we can scarcely hope to determine its particular qualities in this instance.

A word about some of the special verb forms. Of course, black and white speakers disapprove of did git, at least of the pronunciation git. It is one of the familiar instances of "uneducated" or "rustic" dialect. If you care to listen you will find the uneducated git used in the best of families in the South; it is not considered cultivated to point that fact out to members of the family. Other rustic forms are haint heard, knowed, be's. The last of these belongs to a group which two writers have discussed. In letters forwarded, I have comments on distinctive forms of be from Professor James W. Byrd and from Private Thomas J. Rountree. Both letter writers report I's telling you and We's through as being heard among untutored southern Negro speakers. We have surely heard similar expressions. But we must consider this word of caution before we call these usages distinctively Negro. Professor E. Bagby Atwood published in 1953 a Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States, a survey derived from materials which have been gathered for the Linguistic Atlas of North America. He says this in summarizing his knowledge of the social distribution of special verbs: "Some items... (particularly frez, cotch, he do, and gwine) are considerably more frequent among Negroes than among white informants. A larger sampling of Negro usage might enable us to classify these and other forms as 'characteristically Negro,' but the difference would again be one of frequency. I cannot point to any form that is widely current among Negroes that is not also in use among the more rustic of the white informants." It would seem possible that we would find the same general conditions in the other parts of the South which Atwood's survey does not consider.

The will-o'-the-wisp story is a good source of rustic vocabulary--though

quite standard and correct to the mother and son before education began to change the son's standard. It gives us clues as to pronunciation, but those clues must relate to living speech. And finally it gives us a point of departure in any search for prestige dialects.

In twentieth century schools whites and blacks are given instruction in correct English. This folklore of correctness is one of the active shaping elements of our language. And, of course, school teachers everywhere in the South can be most helpful in telling us what they correct. I want to know both the bad English which is discouraged and the good English which should take the place of bad. It seems to me that while everyone subscribes to the general ideal of correctness, Negro and white groups may vary in the English chosen as best. The white may want his child trained to speak the dialect of tidewater Virginia; its social standing is quite high. But I cannot see Negro speakers accepting the same ideal; historical events make it unlikely that they want to be carried back to some linguistic Old Virginny. What is good usage, good English, good pronunciation for persons who'd just as soon have no Southern drawl?

Each of us has his own dialect. That dialect in turn combines with the dialect of others in a most wonderful display of the infinite variety of human actions. It is my hope that we have just begun to find tales, diaries, letters, and the like which will add to our knowledge of the varieties of English heard in the South. Uncle Remus in fiction, the will-of-the-wisp in folklore, and Johnson's writings in his diary all suggest the value of unearthing and publishing materials of that sort. Turner's description of Gullah, Atwood's investigation of verb patterns, and Ives' association of speech with written representation all suggest satisfactory way of discussing Negro or any other kind of speech known in the South.

THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING
OF
THE TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The Tennessee Folklore Society held its 21st annual meeting on November 5 at George Peabody College in Nashville. The sessions were in the charge of Mr. E. G. Rogers, President of the Society. In addition to the scheduled events, the playing of a tape recording of one of the "Tall Tales" radio broadcasts by Bill Wolsey and George Grise entertained many of those in attendance at the meeting.

A part of the program was planned as a memorial to Charles F. Bryan, whose loss is deeply felt by the Society. Preceding the reading of a tribute by Dr. George W. Boswell, the Peabody Madrigalians sang Mr. Bryan's arrangements of a group of folksongs: "Amazing Grace," "I Have a Mother in the Heavens," "The Promised Land," "Charlottown," "Who's Going to Stay with Me Tonight?" "See Me 'Cross the Water," and "Skip-to-M-Lou."

The scheduled program was as follows:

Morning

- 10:00 Assembly
 Devotional..... The Reverend Scott W. Johnson
 Words of Welcome..... John E. Brewton
 10:30 "Folklore for the Creative Writer"..... Miss Isabell Howell
 10:45 "50,000 Watt Folklore" George C. Grise
 11:20 "Folk Rhymes: Friendship Verses" Kelsie Harder
 11:40 Traditional Ballads with Zither Accompani-
 ment..... Mrs. Winnifred Smith Breast
 12:00 "The Folklore of Birth and Death in East
 Tennessee"..... Mrs. Wilma Dykeman Stokely
 12:25 Appointment of Committees
 12:30 Lunch in Peabody College Cafeteria

Afternoon

- 2:00 Program of Charles Bryan's Arrangement of Folk
 Tunes..Peabody Madrigalians directed by Robert L. Bays
 2:20 "Tribute to Charles Faulkner Bryan:
 A Memorial"..... George W. Boswell
 2:40 "Dog Days: Some Notes and a Few Superstitions"
 William W. Bass
 3:00 "Tests of Folkloricity in Soldier's Songs"...Harold Benjamin
 3:25 Business Meeting
 3:50 Adjournment

In the business meeting, the first report called for was that of the Secretary. He noted that the current membership and subscription list totaled 210, a slight drop from last year's total of 214. He reported that in addition to being indexed in the annual "American Bibliography" of the Modern Language Association of America, the Bulletin of the Society would in the future also be indexed in the bibliographies of the American Studies Association. The annual request for back issues of the Bulletin to supply needs of libraries was repeated. The Secretary also expressed appreciation for the contributions submitted for publication in the Bulletin.

The Treasurer, noting that with the 21st meeting the Society could be said to have come of age, reported that it was in a sound financial condition.

A Committee on "Ways and Means" reported several suggestions for increasing the membership and improving the services of the Society. It urged that each present member canvass his circle of friends and acquaintances and urge any who are interested in folklore to affiliate with the Society. It recommended that those who have been members in the past but whose memberships have lapsed should be especially urged to rejoin the Society. It suggested that libraries be canvassed to learn what issues of the Bulletin are most generally needed to complete files, and that such issues should be re-mimeographed. Gordon R. Wood, Chairman of the Committee, then moved that the Society appropriate \$450 toward the purchase of an IBM Executive typewriter for use in publishing the Bulletin, an additional \$203 to be contributed by George Peabody College for Teachers, the title to the machine to rest with the College. The motion was seconded by George C. Grise. In the succeeding discussion, C. P. Snelgrove advised that the paper on which the Bulletin is issued should be of

better quality. After further discussion, the motion was passed without dissent.

The nominating committee presented the following slate of officers for 1956, which was unanimously approved:

President, E. G. Rogers, Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens
 Vice-President, George C. Grise, Austin Peay State College,
 Clarksville
 Treasurer, William W. Bass, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson
 City
 Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College
 for Teachers, Nashville

Invitations for the 1956 annual meeting were tendered the Society by Tennessee Wesleyan College, the University of Chattanooga, and George Peabody College for Teachers. After some discussion it was agreed that the Executive Committee should be given the responsibility for making all arrangements for the next annual meeting.

The report of the Resolutions Committee, accepted with applause, was as follows:

The non-problem-solving Tennessee Folklore Society in its annual unprotracted meeting do hereby resolve going-away presents as follows:

1. A sugar chest of sweetnin' to Dr. John Brewton and Peabody College for pulling us up a chair and turning down the covers. (Dr. Grise's proposal.)
2. A large sassafras log to cheer her as she cheered us, or to provide her light to check Irvin Stone by, to Miss Isabell Howell.
3. A sharp axe to Mrs. Wilma Dykeman Stokely to cut down the pain of birthing new books.
4. A new manual for her unplayed zither to Mrs. Winnie Breast for some of the loveliest shaped notes ever.
5. Roses are red,
 Violets are blue,
 Kelsie Harder;
 Here's a bad rhyme for you:

 We'd make a rhyme
 If we had a starter;
 Poetry is hard,
 But Kelsie is Harder.
6. A 500,000 wat television station to a million wat folklore artist-- George Grise. (Dr. Brewton's idea.)
7. A passel of pitchpipes to the Peabody Madrigalians, provided they will reveal to us why such an obviously happy bunch are called the mad-rigalians.

8. Three Tennessee-Robin Hood ballads to Dr. George Boswell, carrier-on of the tradition, for his memorial to Charlie Bryan.

9. A dog-gone good almanac to Dr. William Bass for his Sirius paper.

10. An honorable discharge and retirement with full pay to old soldier Harold Benjamin, along with the hope that before he fades away he will privately print his songs so our wives may sing them.

11. A perpetually balanced bank account to Dr. T. J. Farr for his years of faithful service as Treasurer of the Society.

12. To the family of Charlie Bryan our heartfelt sympathy and our gratitude for sharing him with us; and to the angels, our envy that he now sings tenor with them.

Respectfully submitted,

THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

George C. Grise, Chairman
John L. Brewton

NEWS AND REVIEWS

BEGINNING WITH VOLUME XXII, NO. 1 (March, 1956), the physical characteristics of the T. F. S. Bulletin will be considerably altered--for the better, it is hoped. In addition to the use of new type-face, we expect to abandon the familiar blue-green cover. Such changes would be appropriately accompanied by alterations in the general editing of the quarterly. The editor solicits suggestions for improvement from members of the Society and subscribers to the Bulletin.

THE KENTUCKY FOLKLORE SOCIETY announced that it would hold a "spring meeting" with the Daniel Boone Festival in Barbourville on October 14-15. What's going on over there? Has our neighbor chosen some kind of season-saving calendar? In any event, the program of activities sounded interesting: folk singing, tale telling, fiddling, and folk dancing in the town square.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences has already issued a prospectus of its Fifth Meeting to be held in Philadelphia on September 1-9, 1956. Interested persons may receive announcements on request from the American Organizing Committee, International Congress of Anthropology, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington 25, D. C.

THE FOLKLORE PRESS, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York City, is planning to re-issue in January 1956 The English and Scottish Popular Ballads by Francis James Child. Five hundred of the five-volume sets will be printed. The pre-publication price is \$30.00.

A COMMERCIAL FOR CHRISTMAS: Handmade Holly Dolls from Ozone, Tennessee, are offered in a wide variety, including a Barb'ry Allen, Tennessee Kids, and a Davy Crockett, thirteen inches high, price, \$15.00.

A USEFUL CATALOG of secondhand books on folklore, anthropology, and ethnology is distributed by Larson's, 5530-32 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28, California.

"THE STUDY OF FOLK LITERATURE" is the title of a selected bilingual (Hebrew and English) bibliography of general and Jewish Folk-Literature recently received by the Tennessee Folklore Society from Dr. Dov. Noy of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The bibliography is issued by the Haifa School of Humanities. Dr. Noy is editor of the monthly newsletter of the Israel Folklore Society, which is also regularly received in the T.F.S. Office.

LEGEND AND RECORDS OF NEGRO COWBOYS is the subject of an article by Philip Durham in The Midwest Journal (VII, ii, Summer 1955). It reminds us that Deadwood Dick was a Negro, and contributes the information that he became a Pullman porter in 1890. Appropriately, the article is titled "The Lost Cowboy."

SEVERAL NEW NUMBERS of Anthropological Records have been published by the University of California Press:

Central Miwok Ceremonies, by E. W. Gifford

Notes on the Bella Bella Kwakintl, by Ronald L. Olson

California Indian Linguistic Records: The Mission Indian Vocabularies of H. W. Henshaw, edited by R. F. Heizer

Mohave Pottery, by A. L. Kroeber and Michael J. Horner

The Aboriginal Population of the San Joaquin Valley, California, by S. F. Cook.

SPEAKING IN LOS ANGELES last summer, Dr. Tristram P. Coffin made newspaper headlines with observation that "narrative obituary poetry hidden in the dusty files of rural newspapers may be a rich source of Americana." He cited as example the memorial "poem" published in a Delaware, Ohio, weekly recording the tragedy of Widow Biddle's "middle son" who drank too much whiskey and fell asleep on a railway track. Another example was that of the ballad of Guy Swain who "climbed a tree after a coon, sawed off the wrong limb and fell to his death." Obviously, Dr. Coffin is attracted by the unintended humor of these "poems" just as Mark Twain was (vide Huckleberry Finn).

THE CURRENT NUMBER of Midwest Folklore contains a proposal for "Ballad Classifications" by Prof. D. K. Wilgus of Western Kentucky State College. Members of the Tennessee Folklore Society will perhaps remember that Prof. Wilgus spoke on a related subject at our annual meeting in 1952.

Midwest Folklore also carries an article on "Folksong Definitions" by W. F. Amann, one on the "Decline and 'Revival' of Anglo-American Folk Music" by Samuel F. Bayard, and a study of "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor" by Richard Harris. These (and other items in the summer, 1955, issue as well) should be of interest to members of our Society.

James Street's South, ed. by James Street, Jr. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955. \$3.75.

James Street, Jr., whose preface indicates that he will never equal his father's journalistic style, has compiled in this anthology a series of essays on the South by the author of Tap Roots, The Gauntlet, and ten other volumes. These essays, with one exception, have been published in periodicals during the past decade. Along with writings on various aspects of life in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Arkansas, Street includes a section entitled "The Great Smokies," which will be of interest to many folklorists of Tennessee. In it are mentioned Andy Jackson and Davy Crockett, but of more interest are such tales as the one of the Tennessee "war of roses," a unique governor's race in Happy Valley, Carter County. This drama stars Alf and Bob Taylor, brothers, who were candidates on the Republican and Democrat tickets respectively. Though this story and others (on such topics as the labor troubles in Elizabethton and the tornado in Rye Cove) have ample basis in historical fact, they read like folk tales, told by Street in the same manner in which he evidently heard them repeated by the people of the Tennessee hills.

In a section on ballads, Street tells the story of Tom Collins, who lived a "whoop and a holler as the crow flies" from his enemies. (Doesn't Street wrongly combine here two good figures of speech pertaining to distance?) He relates that the Hatfield-McCoy feud "was a fish fry" compared to the feud of the Tom Collins clan, adding that today's popular drink of the same name may be "the only monument Tom Collins ever got." Street also discusses briefly "The Old Pine Tree," "Old '97," and "When You and I were Young Maggie" (he quotes the DAR as the authority for saying this song was written on the Hiwassee River near Chattanooga), but he leaves no doubt that his boyhood hero was Casey Jones. The story of Casey (or Cayce) Jones, who "moved to Memphis in middle years," is the most interesting and the concluding tale of the section devoted to Tennessee. The author issues a challenge to the folklorists of Tennessee by stating "the history of Dixie has been told in ballads, strange songs virtually unsung and unknown beyond the domains of the clans they concern."

--James W. Byrd
East Texas State Teachers College

William A. Logan, Road to Heaven. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1955. \$1.50.

Road to Heaven by William A. Logan and edited by Allen M. Garrett is a collection of Negro spirituals. These were heard, collected, and recorded by Mr. Logan as he began to learn and love these spirituals during his childhood back in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. Mr. Logan is aware of certain of the difficulties in catching the finer pitches and rhythms in the recording of the melodies which are important to this type of folk music.

"Negro spirituals," says Mr. Garrett, "are the expression of a race in bondage." He sings to forget the troubles of his wearied existence. His songs therefore lend themselves to "improvisation" and to bodily movement. These syncopated rhythmic patterns indicate "the principal differentiations between the Negro spirituals and those of the white man." They are based, therefore, as sources, on the Bible, on eloquent heard sermons, on spontaneous outpouring of emotion by some member of the congregation, and on spirituals and

hymns of the white man. That certain of the rhythms are racially African and that they are imitations of the white spiritual influence are two basic theories as to their origin and influence.

These spirituals are collected from eight southern states--Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky, the Carolinas, and Virginia. In addition to the lyrics and music there are four pages of "Notes Concerning the Spirituals." An occasional marked similarity may be traced to our Tennessee version of one of these as the Virginia version of "Nobody Knows" (No. 27) with our Tennessee version of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I see." See also Songs of America by Boatman, and English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians, Vols. I-II, by Cecil Sharp.

--E. G. Rogers
Tennessee Wesleyan College

Elizabeth Feagles, Talk Like a Cowboy. San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1955. \$2.00.

The sub-title of this small volume is more revealing than the title: "A Dictionary of Real Western Lingo for Young Cowboys and Cowgirls." Obviously designed for young readers, this book is in a simple narrative form which tells the story of a cowboy's day. The italicized words of cowboy lingo are first seen in context, though they do appear in dictionary form (from afoot to yearling) in the "Index and Key to Pronunciation" in the back of the book.

Miss Feagles believes that cowboy lingo is "a language all its own--borrowed from the Indians, the Mexicans, the traders who passed through the Old West." It appears, however, that she has been content to compile her dictionary from literary sources (the book is dedicated to Will James, J. Frank Dobie, Julius Verne Allen, and others who "have helped preserve the colorful language and customs of the American West") rather than from cowboys themselves. Her dictionary has a Zane Gray purity, leaving the reader with the impression that no vulgar word or uncouth phrase was ever heard in a colorful era of vigorous men whose daily lives were limited to masculine company. There is still a need for some folklorist to compile a companion volume, perhaps something comparable to Eric Patridge's Shakespeare's Bawdy.

Talk Like a Cowboy does not claim, however, to be anything that it isn't. The young (and perhaps older) reader will find that it is, as the dust jacket promises, a compilation of colorful words "flavored by the work the cowboy does."

--James W. Byrd
East Texas State Teachers College

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President, E. G. Rogers, Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens, Tennessee
Vice President, Gordon R. Wood, University of Chattanooga, Chattanooga,
Tennessee

Treasurer, T. J. Farr, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville,
Tennessee

Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers,
Nashville, Tennessee

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